

Changing Attitudes towards Dry Sanitation in Msunduza, Swaziland

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Introduction



- Swaziland is a small kingdom in South-East Africa.
- Population approximately 1.2 million.
- HIV/AIDS prevalence is 26 % (UNICEF, 2012).
- TUAS has been working in Swaziland since 2004.
- Msunduzi is a peri-urban community of 16 000 inhabitants close to the centre of Mbabane, the capital (Akatama, 2008).
- Features of the area are steep topography, poor roads and inadequate infrastructure.
- In the unofficial areas, 10 % have water closets and the rest use buckets, pit latrines or flying toilets (Koivisto, 2005).



Introduction



- After a baseline study, Msunduzi Dry Sanitation Project started in 2007 with the training of local volunteers as Sanitation Experts.
- The partners in the project are the Global Dry Toilet Association of Finland and the Salvation Army of Swaziland.
- Funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- During the first phase (2007-2008), 16 toilets were built and 5000 people and 1000 pupils educated annually.
- In the second phase (2009-2011) participation was emphasized through various workshops.
- In the current and final phase (2012-2013), the focus is on local ownership and spreading the knowledge on dry sanitation.



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Methods



- In the paper two separate studies were examined, first one conducted in 2008-9 and the latter 2011-12, respectively.
- The first one examined the perceptions and knowledge of dry sanitation and what motivates people to use dry toilets.
- The study was qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews and observation. Interviewees included future toilet owners, Sanitation Experts and professionals, altogether 23 people (Haimi & Ranta, 2009).
- The study in 2011 consisted of 16 qualitative interviews to assess the impacts of education.
- The questions were devised to determine people's knowledge and attitudes towards dry sanitation.
- The interviewees included toilet owners, immediate neighbours and community leaders (Kirstinä, forthcoming).



Results



- The first study indicated that people had difficulties in understanding the concept of dry sanitation and the connection between sanitation, environment and health.
- The second study implied that education is paying off: the concepts are better known and the use of human manure better accepted, the knowledge about links between sanitation and health improved, the interviewees were motivated to receive more education and to take care of their toilets.



Results: Knowledge about Sanitation Hygiene and Dry Sanitation



- In 2008, people had difficulties in comprehending dry sanitation, the process of composting in to manure and the connection between dry sanitation, state of environment and health.
- In 2011, all of the respondents seemed to have good basic knowledge about hygiene and its importance. The benefits of toilets, (e.g. permanence, manure and use of water) were named and maintenance routines of toilets were known.
- In 2011, some differences were identified between the groups of interviewees: e.g. neighbours knowledge was less precise and the leaders mentioned more practical issues such as handwashing possibilities and toilets as status of wealth.



Results: Attitudes and Motivation in 2008



- In 2008, people's prejudices towards DS were clear and explained by the novel concept.
- Women perceived dry sanitation more positively than men.
- The roles and responsibilities of the local leaders and the Sanitation Experts were emphasized.
- The biggest drivers for DS were financial motivators for the community people while interviewed professionals emphasized improved health.
- Long-term planning considered a challenge.
- Dry toilets were seen backward and insufficient development.
- Practical hands-on experience and seeing visible results were considered most efficient.



Results: Attitudes and Motivation in 2011



- Dry sanitation was more considered as a modern solution.
- Interest to have one's own dry toilet, to receive more education and to use manure in their gardens was high.
- The responsibilities of the Sanitation Experts and toilet owners were more clear.
- Caretakers for public toilets had been appointed since previous study.
- Need for good management was emphasized, especially by the leadership.
- Leaders role was seen on the other hand as encouraging and participatory and on the other hand, disappointment was expressed.



Results: Culture and traditions



In 2008,

- the formality of dry toilets was seen problematic.
- handling and even talking about sanitation was considered a taboo.

In 2011,

- talking about sanitation was not an issue.
- some are content with their pit latrines and consider dry sanitation more suitable for the rural areas.
- general sentiment was acceptance and appreciation especially by the toilet owners and the leaders.



Conclusions



Picture: Anniina Kirstinä



- Positive progress in people's attitudes and knowledge on health and sanitation.
- Yet, more education is needed and e.g. composting was found difficult.
- The toilet owners had fairly good knowledge, but the leaders and other indirect beneficiaries need more education.
- More practical training needed.
- Sanitation Experts' and local leaders role had changed during the implementation of the project.
- The stigma of speaking about sanitation and of handling of human waste had decreased.

Conclusions cont.



- The financial benefits might be perceived as the biggest drivers for dry sanitation in the beginning, improved health and state of the environment can become more important in the long run.
- The attitudes towards the project and DS of the leaders have improved and plays a major role in sustaining the results.
- The local culture, livelihood and environment needs to be considered throughout the project; e.g. the requirements of the construction policy in Swaziland has increased the costs and challenged the motivation of people to construct their own toilets.
- Due to the fast and remarkable in and out migration in Msunduzi, education has been hindered.
- Education should be:
 - versatile, long-lasting and demonstrated with visible results
 - proactive, practical and participatory to all stakeholders
 - integrated to existing structures



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Thank you!

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